



## **King County**

### **Department of Community and Human Services**

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## **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN ADDENDUM**

### **2012 – 2017 Veterans and Human Services Levy**

#### **Activity 2.6.D Employment and Training: King County Internship/Fellowship Program for Veterans**

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#### **1. Goal**

Increase self-sufficiency of veterans and vulnerable populations at risk of homelessness.

#### **2. Strategy**

Strategy Two of the Veterans and Human Services Levy Service Improvement Plan (SIP) is “Ending Homelessness”.

#### **3. Activity 2.6: Employment and Training**

The Veterans Internship/Fellowship Program (Heroes Employment Reintegration Opportunity (HERO)) activity described below is one of four activities that have been funded under Activity 2.6 Employment and Training.

#### **4. Service Needs, Populations to be Served, and Promotion of Equity and Social Justice**

##### *a) Service Needs*

Veterans are returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan after being out of the civilian labor market for some time. There will be an estimated additional 1000 veterans annually returning to King County as they complete their military service. They need intensive, personalized services to assure that they make a smooth transition to the King County labor market in a self-sufficient career pathway. They are at risk of homelessness for themselves and their families and their spouses may also need career employment services to assure family self-sufficiency. Earlier veterans from the Gulf war and early global war on terror still find themselves with limited employment options. The unemployment rate for Veterans remains higher than the general population, averaging 15.2 percent nationally in 2011. While the Veterans unemployment rate has been dropping and is now at 6.4 percent nationally, Washington State's overall unemployment rate in 2014 was at 6.3%, while the unemployment rate for post 9/11 veterans was at 11.4 percent.

During 2014 the King County Veterans Program (KCVF) served 2,450 clients, of whom 302 had served in the military since the Gulf War. Of all clients receiving services, the average age for these veterans was 51 with 13 percent being between the ages of 25

and 34, 42 percent being between the ages of 35 and 54, and 19 percent between 55 and 59 years of age. One percent of clients were under 25 years of age and 23 percent were 60 or older. The majority of these veterans were white (53 percent) followed by African-Americans at 37 percent. About 4 percent were American Indian or Alaska native. A total of 109 clients identified as Hispanic.

Most clients served were male (85 percent) but females at 15 percent is similar to the number served last year. . Education levels varied with 29 percent not having gone beyond high school, 38 percent having attended college without attaining a degree and 30 percent earning a college degree or professional certificate.

The KCVP clients who were administered the KCVP self-sufficiency tool in 2014 responded to employment questions and received a score on their employment stability. A total of 72 percent of them were rated as in employment crisis or highly vulnerable to economic crisis (score of 5 or lower on a scale of one to ten.)

The Department of Community and Human Services, Employment and Education Resources unit in partnership with King County's Department of Human Resources is leading the way to ensure that vulnerable clients such as these get more than an entry level job, but in the spirit of the Levy goal, begin a pathway leading to self-sufficiency.

b) *Populations to be Served*

Veterans who are enrolled in training or school will be served by internships and other veterans by fellowships to provide career opportunities and help them reduce their risk of homelessness. The unemployment rate has remained high in King County throughout the recession and Veterans need work opportunities to help them become knowledgeable and obtain skills in a variety of work areas. Intensive outreach to Veterans to explain these career opportunities will be coordinated by the King County Veterans Program through the network of Veteran services organizations.

c) *Promotion of Equity and Social Justice*

The Equity and Social Justice Ordinance requires King County to consider the impacts of its policies and activities on its efforts to achieve fairness and opportunity for all people, particularly for people of color, low-income communities and people with limited English proficiency. The King County Equity Impact Review Tool available online at: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/equity/toolsandresources.aspx> provides a list of the determinants of equity that may be affected by your activity. Evaluate your activity's impact by responding to the following questions:

i) Will your activity have an impact on equity?

A self-sufficient career is central to real Equity and Social Justice in order to assure that people are not living in poverty. This project will assist Veterans in need of employment services prepare for and obtain career pathway employment that provides health care and a living wage appropriate to the size of their family.

- ii) What population groups are likely to be affected by the proposal? How will communities of color, low-income communities or limited English proficiency communities be impacted?

Veterans are a central focus of this employment project. There are Vietnam Veterans still struggling with homelessness that can benefit from these services. Additionally, there are significant numbers of Post 9/11 Veterans now returning from Iraq and Afghanistan who need these services to prevent homelessness. Many of these Veterans are from communities of color.

- iii) What actions will be taken to enhance likely positive impacts on these communities and mitigate possible negative impacts?

There will be no negative impacts from this proposal. By providing internships for veterans enrolled in school and fellowships, veterans will be provided opportunities to translate their military skills to civilian jobs, gain confidence, and greater access to employment.

## **5. Activity Description**

### **OVERVIEW**

The King County Veterans Internship Program was set up as an 18 month pilot program that ran from January 2013 through June 2014. It was based on a cohort model in which participants were employed from January – June, or July – December and worked 30 hours per week. Recruitment and placement of participants was handled centrally by King County's Department of Human Resources. The internship program participants were referred to as "interns," although they were not required to be pursuing an educational program of study. Participants were provided a King County mentor who was also a veteran, a case manager from the King County Veterans Services Program, access to a variety of support services, resume and interview skills training, field trips to learn more about employment opportunities within King County, and assistance with applying for King County positions. There was a formal graduation ceremony upon completion of each cohort experience and a certificate of completion was provided. Levy funds paid 50 percent of each participant's wages for the six months they worked as an intern. Over the 18 month pilot there were three separate cohorts in which a total of 33 veterans participated. Of these participants 29 either obtained employment or continued their occupational skills training. Of these 29, fifteen continued their County employment in varying durations (STT, TLT or Career Service.)

The Veterans Internship/Fellowship Program has the following objectives:

### **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

- Serve veterans

Qualified candidates will meet the veteran eligibility criteria set forth by the King County Veterans' Program (KCVP). Given the high levels of unemployment for veterans who served in active duty in the last decade, recruitment efforts will target newly returning veterans.

- Provide on-the-job training

The internship/fellowship program participants will receive both technical job training and guidance on workplace behavior, competencies, individual responsibilities, and development of occupational skill sets. Participants will be assigned to assist journey or higher level workers in either central or line departments in order to enhance previous job skills or to gain new experience in the support areas of human resources and fiscal support, crafts, heavy maintenance, information technology, office/clerical and technical support.

- Assist with the transition from military to civilian employment

Programs designed to help service members shift from military to civilian employment through supportive paid work training experiences are successful in easing the transition, increasing employability and improving living stability. Veterans will get the chance to see their military skills at work in the civilian world. This improves their ability to communicate their skills in the job application and hiring process.

- Provide opportunity for King County to see how military skills translate

King County staff will be able to identify transferable military skills and see the talent veterans' offer.

- Increase veterans overall employability and access to King County and other civilian jobs

The internships and fellowships will increase participants' knowledge of and access to existing jobs and minimize barriers that exist around translating military into civilian skills.

Feedback from both participants and hiring agencies from the 18 month pilot is outlined below.

#### **WHAT WORKED WELL**

- Veterans reported being better prepared for civilian employment, appreciated transition support; and valued King County as an employer.
- Employees who worked with the interns reported gaining a fresh perspective and greater understanding of military skills.
- All levels reported making friends and contacts for life.

#### **WHAT SUPPORTS REDESIGN**

- The ultimate goal is full-time employment, being labeled an "intern" at this stage of their career felt a step back – there needed to be a clearer pathway to employment.
- The cohort model, with group start-end dates, was a barrier to employment for both department and the veteran.
- There was too much time between recruitment and start date.
- The cohort model was staff intensive for so few vets served.
- Participants would have appreciated a longer experience and an ability to work 40 hours per week.

- Participants appreciated the availability of case managers to assist them with transition services, but did not want a case manager required as part of the experience.

Based on the feedback outlined above, King County is evolving and expanding the Veteran Internship Program to provide a variety of pathways that support veterans in transitioning from military to civilian employment. In addition, the variety of experiences offered will help create a pipeline of veteran talent for King County positions and support our commitment to transition from a “Vet-Friendly” to a “Vet-Ready” employer.

## **PROGRAM EXPANSION AND EVOLUTION**

The Veterans Internship Program will be modified by creating two tracks. One track will be an “internship,” which will serve veterans who are pursuing a formal educational program of study, and the second track will be a “fellowship” which will serve those veterans who seek an opportunity to gain on the job training and civilian work experience.

### **INTERNSHIP TRACK**

- Interns will work up to 20 hours/week during the school year, and full time during holiday and summer breaks.
- Internships can continue as long as the veteran is enrolled full-time in their educational program of study.
- Interns pursuing a technical, Associate or Bachelor level program of study will be paid at \$15.30 per hour (2015 rates).
- Interns pursuing graduate level programs of study will be paid at \$17.30 per hour (2015 rates).
- Interns will be provided an Orca bus pass.
- Medical benefits, sick leave and vacation leave will not be provided.

### **FELLOWSHIP TRACK**

- Fellows will have the ability to work up to 40 hours per week for six months.
- Fellows will receive medical benefits and an Orca bus pass for the duration of the experience (sick leave and vacation will not be included).
- Hiring departments will have the option to extend the fellowship experience an additional six months or longer, not to exceed a combined total of 2080 hours.

### **CHANGES IMPACTING BOTH INTERNSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCES**

- King County hiring departments will recruit and fill their own internship and fellowship positions. Oversight will be provided by the County’s Human Resources Division, and continued assistance will be available from DCHS’s King County Veterans Program staff.
- The cohort model will be eliminated thus allowing interns and fellows to start their employment experience anytime during the year thereby reducing the time from recruitment to placement into the internship or fellowship position. Eliminating the cohort model also means eliminating graduation ceremonies and certificates of completion.

### **WHAT WILL REMAIN THE SAME FOR BOTH TRACKS**

- Flexibility in veteran's work hours as pre-arranged and agreed upon with hiring supervisor.
- Training on resume development, interviewing and job search skills; assistance with applying for King County jobs; and access to over 2,000 King County on-line and classroom training courses and certificate programs.
- Matching veteran interns and fellows with a veteran "buddy" in the organization in which they are placed who is oriented to the needs of recent veterans, and who has the knowledge to help the veteran understand the organization's culture, expectations and can help socialize the veteran within the organization.
- Orienting internship and fellowship participants to services offered through the King County Veterans Program but allowing participant's the choice of working with a case manager anytime during their experience.
- Orienting and providing military cultural training for all internship and fellowship hiring managers, and providing them with information and resources to orient their staff to military cultural concepts and help create a supportive work environment for the veteran.

### USE OF LEVY FUNDS

Levy funds will pay 50% of the participant's first six months of the fellow's or intern's wages. However, because the fellowship will allow the veteran to work up to 40 hours/week, the cost translates to approximately \$1224 per month or a maximum of \$7,344 for six months based on the participant working 40 hours per week @ \$15.30/hour (2015 rates).

For an internship experience, the cost translates to approximately \$3,672 for six months at 20 hours per week @ \$15.30/hour (2015 rates).

Once the first six months of the internship or fellowship experience has been completed, hiring departments may choose to continue employing the veteran in the internship or fellowship and pay 100 percent of the veteran's wages.

## 6. Funds Available

A special allocation of 2006-2011 Veterans and Human Services Levy fund balance in the amount of \$200,000 was allocated for 2012-2014 for Activity 2.6 D King County Veterans Internship Program.. In addition, the 2015-2016 Community Services Division Budget Request included an addition \$200,000 for 2015 and 2016 as described in the chart below.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Veterans Levy</b>	<b>\$33,333</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$66,667</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Human Services Levy</b>						
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$33,333</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$66,667</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>-</b>

## 7. Evidence-based or Promising Practices

The ultimate goal of any internship or fellowship experience is to provide individuals training and job experience so they can obtain "permanent" positions. However, is there any research that shows whether or not internship and fellowship opportunities actually lead to "permanent" positions?

In 2011, the International Journal of Manpower printed an article titled, *“Are temporary jobs a port of entry into permanent employment? Evidence from matched employer-employee,”* by Fabio Berton, Francesco Devicienti and Lia Pacelli. The researchers found that the transition to permanent employment is more likely for individuals working in a temporary capacity than for the unemployed. It was also noted that temporary positions that provide formal training alongside a lower labor cost are the most effective port-of-entry opportunities.

Since internships and fellowships are temporary positions that provide on-the-job training and real work experience at a lower labor cost, they appear to align directly with the research findings.

## **8. Service Partnerships**

King County’s Human Resources Division will partner with King County human resources staff in all King County agencies, King County’s Veterans Program and their service partners, and the Vet Corps, and will be establishing partnerships with other government jurisdictions within King County.

## **9. Performance Measures**

### **Desired Outcomes**

1. Ninety percent of veteran participants obtain paid employment or enters occupational skills training within 90 days of completing the six month experience.
2. Of those veterans who achieve employment household annual income is projected as over 50% of area median income, 6 months after ending the program.<sup>1</sup>

### **Indicators**

1. Number of post 9/11 veterans hired into an internship or a fellowship.
2. Number of veterans who complete the full duration of their experience.
3. Number of veterans hired into King County career service or temporary positions within 90 days of completing their internship or fellowship.
4. Number of veteran participants hired within 90 days of completing their internship or fellowship into non-King County positions.
5. Average starting wage (projected as annual household income) for those veterans who obtain employment within 90 days of completing their internship or fellowship.
6. Of those employed after participating in the program, jobs are retained at least 6 months after initial employment.<sup>2</sup>
7. Number of veterans entering a formal program of study within 90 days of completing their fellowship.

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<sup>1</sup> Follow-up survey will be conducted by DCHS Performance Measurement and Evaluation Unit based on information provided by HRD.

<sup>2</sup> Follow-up survey will be conducted by DCHS Performance Measurement and Evaluation Unit based on information provided by HRD.

